

Message Text

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ORIGIN ACDA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00
OES-07 /056 R

DRAFTED BY ACDA/PA:JMPOPE:PC

APPROVED BY ACDA/PA:TAHALSTED

-----016934 290009Z /70

P 282208Z MAR 78

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY

INFO USDEL MBFR VIENNA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

UNCLAS STATE 079756

USSALTTWO/CTB

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PARM, SOPN

SUBJECT: MARCH 28 ROUNDUP: PRESS ITEMS OF ARMS CONTROL
INTEREST

LONDON FOR AMB/EX

1. RICHARD BURT OF NEW YORK TIMES QUOTED HIGH-RANKING
ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS AS SAYING THAT WESTERN ALLIANCE
SOON WOULD AGREE TO PLAN THAT COULD ENABLE U.S. TO BEGIN
PRODUCING NEUTRON WARHEAD LATER THIS YEAR. "OFFICIALS SAID
THAT THEY EXPECTED AN ANNOUNCEMENT BY ALLIANCE EARLY NEXT
MONTH DEALING BOTH WITH QUESTION OF AMERICAN PRODUCTION OF
WEAPON AND ITS DEPLOYMENT IN WESTERN EUROPE," BURT REPORTED.
"THEY SAID THAT AN ANNOUNCEMENT HAD BEEN SCHEDULED FOR
EARLY LAST WEEK, BUT THAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAD AT LAST

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MINUTE POSTPONED CAREFULLY DEVISED PLAN FOR MOVING AHEAD
WITH BOMB. ALTHOUGH OFFICIALS DESCRIBED DELAY AS
TEMPORARY, THEY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT IT HAD PROVOKED HEATED
DEBATE WITHIN ADMINISTRATION AND HAD COMPLICATED EFFORTS BY
ALLIANCE TO REACH AGREEMENT ON SENSITIVE ISSUE...OFFICIALS
SAID THAT UNDER COMPROMISE U.S. WOULD IMMEDIATELY BEGIN
PRODUCING WEAPON, BUT ITS DEPLOYMENT IN EUROPE WOULD BE
HELD UP FOR TWO YEARS WHILE ALLIANCE TESTED MOSCOW'S
REACTION TO LIMITING NEUTRON BOMB IN RETURN FOR RESTRI-
TIONS ON NEW SOVIET NUCLEAR SYSTEM, SUCH AS INTERMEDIATE-

RANGE SS-20. IF THIS EFFORT AT ARMS CONTROL FAILED, ALLIANCE COUNTRIES WOULD THEN ALLOW U.S. TO BEGIN DEPLOYING NEUTRON BOMB ON THEIR TERRITORY. WHITE HOUSE OFFICIALS INDICATED THAT MR. CARTER'S DECISION NOT TO MOVE AHEAD WITH PLAN WAS BASED ON DOUBTS WHETHER ALLIED GOVERNMENTS WERE IN FACT PREPARED TO ALLOW BOMB'S DEPLOYMENT IF TALKS WITH MOSCOW FAILED. MR. CARTER, THEY SAID, HAS ASKED FOR STRONGER COMMITMENT FROM ALLIED LEADERS ON QUESTION BEFORE HE APPROVES PLAN."

2. WALTER PINCUS, OF WASHINGTON POST, ON SAME SUBJECT, SAID CARTER ADMINISTRATION "ABRUPTLY CHANGED COURSE LAST WEEK AND CALLED OFF NEGOTIATIONS IN BRUSSELS WITH ITS EUROPEAN NATO ALLIES SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED TO COURT THEIR PUBLIC SUPPORT OF U.S. PRODUCTION OF NEUTRON ARTILLERY SHELLS AND MISSILE WARHEADS." PINCUS SAID "ALTHOUGH SOME ADMINISTRATION SOURCES MAINTAINED YESTERDAY THAT PRESIDENT HAS NOT YET MADE HIS FINAL GO-AHEAD DECISION, TALKS WHICH HAD BEEN UNDER WAY FOR SEVERAL WEEKS WERE BASED ON PRELIMINARY WHITE HOUSE DETERMINATION THAT PRODUCTION ORDER WOULD BE MADE BY MID-APRIL." ONE SOURCE TOLD PINCUS "THAT DECISION HAD BEEN MADE SOME TIME AGO, BUT NOW WE ARE IN HOLDING PATTERN." PINCUS SAID SOME GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS UNCLASSIFIED

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INTERPRETED TALKS CANCELLATION LAST WEEK AS SIGN PRESIDENT HAS REVERSED HIMSELF AND IS NOW LEANING AGAINST NEUTRON GO-AHEAD. OTHERS, HOWEVER, SAID CARTER HAS MADE ONLY "DECISION TO DELAY DECISION." PINCUS SAID "THERE WAS SOME CONSTERNATION AT STATE DEPARTMENT BECAUSE OF SUDDEN WHITE HOUSE DECISION LAST WEEK TO PULL BACK FROM NEUTRON PRODUCTION DISCUSSIONS." HE SAID GREAT DEAL OF DIPLOMATIC EFFORT HAD GONE INTO MOVING WEST GERMAN CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT AND BRITISH PRIME MINISTER CALLAGHAN CLOSER TO SPEAKING OUT IN SUPPORT OF PRODUCTION. "ACCORDING TO ONE SOURCE, HIGH-LEVEL CARTER AIDE WILL GO TO EUROPE SOON TO EXPLAIN PRESIDENT'S NEW COURSE," PINCUS REPORTED. HE SAID THERE WAS "NO CONSENSUS ON HOW LONG CURRENT 'HOLDING PATTERN' WOULD LAST."

3. TIME MAGAZINE (APRIL 3) REPORTED ON DAYLONG NATIONAL SECURITY ISSUES ROUND TABLE IT SPONSORED IN NEW YORK FEATURING "FIVE OF NATION'S LEADING DEFENSE EXPERTS" TO ANALYZE AND EXPLAIN SOVIET MILITARY CHALLENGE. "WHILE ANALYSTS REPRESENTED SOME WIDELY DIVERGENT VIEWS, THEY GENERALLY AGREED ON NUMBER OF KEY MATTERS: 1. SOVIET UNION'S CONTINUING NUCLEAR AND CONVENTIONAL MILITARY BUILDUP IS INCREASINGLY OMINOUS AND MAY JEOPARDIZE DELICATE BALANCE OF POWER THAT HAS DETERRED NUCLEAR WAR. 2. DISARMAMENT NEGOTIATIONS LIKE SALT MAY NOT BE CAPABLE, BY THEMSELVES, OF PRESERVING THIS US-USSR BALANCE.

3. U.S. MAY BE HAMPERED BY LACK OF CREATIVE STRATEGIC THINKING." ANALYSTS WERE ACDA ASSISTANT DIRECTOR BARRY BLECHMAN, MOST "DOVISH" OF GROUP; JOHN COLLINS, SENIOR SPECIALIST IN NATIONAL DEFENSE AT CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE; LT. GEN. ANDREW GOODPASTER; WILLIAM HYLAND, SENIOR FELLOW AT GEORGETOWN CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES, AND EDWARD LUUTWAK, SENIOR FELLOW AT GEORGETOWN CENTER.

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4. AVIATION WEEK (MARCH 27) REPORTED THAT ADMINISTRATION HAS CONDUCTED INTENSIVE INTERNAL MEETINGS RECENTLY TO ARRIVE AT CONSENSUS IN PRESENTING COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN TREATY THAT WILL NOT ONLY BE SIGNED BY SOVIET UNION, BUT ALSO WILL RECEIVE FINAL APPROVAL OF CAUTIOUS CONGRESS. QUOTING CONGRESSIONAL MEMBERS AND STAFFERS, AVIATION WEEK SAID ADMINISTRATION IS SPLIT OVER VITAL ISSUES OF VERIFICATION OF ANY CTB AGREEMENT. CONGRESSIONAL AIDE SAID INTERDEPARTMENTAL DIFFERENCES CENTER ON PERMITTING SOME LEVEL OF NUCLEAR ACTIVITIES, AVIATION WEEK ADDED. LED BY ACDA DIRECTOR WARNE, NSC HAS ATTEMPTED TO CONVINCE PRESIDENT THAT LOWER NUCLEAR THRESHOLD COULD BE ACCEPTED, AVIATION WEEK REPORTED. ON OTHER SIDE, PENTAGON AND ENERGY DEPARTMENT MAINTAIN THAT ONLY HIGHER NUCLEAR THRESHOLD LEVEL COULD BE ALLOWED TO PREVENT SOVIETS FROM CIRCUMVENTING TREATY. "SUDDEN SURGE IN ADMINISTRATION'S EFFORTS AT HAMMERING OUT CTB TREATY WAS ATTRIBUTED BY CONGRESSIONAL STAFF MEMBER TO APPARENT DEADLOCK IN SALT," AVIATION WEEK STATED. "HE NOTED THAT ADMINISTRATION MAY BE CONTEMPLATING AN EARLY EFFORT IN CTB AREA BECAUSE 'SOME AGREEMENT COULD GET THROUGH' CONGRESS THIS TIME." MAGAZINE SAID HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRED BY REP. MELVIN PRICE RECENTLY HELD CLOSED-DOOR HEARINGS ON CTB TREATY. WITNESSES INCLUDED ACDA ASSISTANT DIRECTOR THOMAS DAVIES. SIMILAR HEARING IS BEING PLANNED BY SUBCOMMITTEE OF SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE.

5. NEW YORK TIMES SAID INTELLIGENCE OFFICIALS YESTERDAY DENIED LONDON DAILY TELEGRAPH REPORT THAT SOVIET UNION WAS BUILDING BASE FOR NUCLEAR SUBMARINES IN CUBA, BUT THEY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT NEW NAVAL FACILITY WAS UNDER CONSTRUCTION AT CUBAN PORT OF CIENFUEGOS. OFFICIALS SAID NEW CONSTRUCTION HAD BEEN DETECTED AT CIENFUEGOS BUT THAT UNCLASSIFIED

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THERE WAS NOTHING TO SUGGEST THAT IT WAS MEANT FOR USE BY SOVIET SUBMARINES, TIMES REPORTED. THESE OFFICIALS SAID LAST TIME SOVIET NUCLEAR SUBMARINE VISITED CUBA WAS IN 1973 AND THAT IT WAS NOT ARMED WITH STRATEGIC MISSILES.

OFFICIALS SAID NEW FACILITY AT CIENFUEGOS WAS UNDER
REGULAR SCRUTINY AND ARRIVAL OF MISSILE-ARMED SUBMARINES
COULD BE QUICKLY DETECTED.

6. SYNDICATED COLUMNIST MARQUIS CHILDS, WRITING IN
WASHINGTON POST, SAID AMBASSADOR GERARD SMITH HAS "EXCEP-
TIONAL QUALIFICATIONS" FOR HIS PRESENT ASSIGNMENT AS
AMBASSADOR AT LARGE. HE SAID SMITH KNOWS PROBABLY MORE
THAN ANY OTHER INDIVIDUAL OUTSIDE THE SCIENCE ORBIT ABOUT
THE COMPLEXITIES OF THE NUCLEAR PROCESS AND WHAT THAT
PROCESS MEANS WHEN TRANSLATED INTO "FANTASTIC WEAPONS"
ALREADY IN EXISTENCE, UNDER CONSTRUCTION OR ON DRAWING
BOARD. CHILDS SAID SMITH IS "FIRM IN HIS BELIEF THAT
SENSE WILL ULTIMATELY PREVAIL AND THAT NUMBER OF NUCLEAR
POWERS WILL BE CONFINED TO PRESENT SIX." COOPER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 26 sep 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, SALT (ARMS CONTROL), NEGOTIATIONS, PRESS SOMMARIES, MEETING REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE079756
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: ACDA/PA:JMPOPE:PC
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: n/a
Expiration:
Film Number: D780135-0196
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197803126/baaafcfr.tel
Line Count: 181
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 026e5ebb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN ACDA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3167209
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MARCH 28 ROUNDUP: PRESS ITEMS OF ARMS CONTROL INTEREST
TAGS: PARM, SOPN, US, UR
To: GENEVA INFO MBFR VIENNA MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/026e5ebb-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014